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Report for America Announces 61 Corps Members Placed in 50 Local News Organizations

NEW YORK—After a highly competitive search, Report for America has announced the selection and placement of its 2019 class: 61 reporters in 50 local news organizations across 28 states and Puerto Rico.

Report for America is a national service program that places talented emerging journalists into local news organizations to report for one to two years on under-covered issues and communities. An initiative of The GroundTruth Project, Report for America addresses an urgent need in American journalism at a time when local news deserts threaten our democracy like never before.

The reporters, referred to as “corps members,” were chosen after a highly selective national competition that drew nearly 1,000 applications. Some 70 leading journalists, editors and teachers acted as judges.

The 2019 corps, which begins reporting in June, includes 50 newly selected journalists and 11 current Report for America corps members who will continue their service for a second year.

These reporters reflect the wide ranging perspectives of communities they will serve—more than forty-percent of the corps members are journalists of color and seventy-percent are women. One-third of the corps members will be reporting in a place they call home.

The new corps members have won numerous awards, including North Dakota Newspaper Association Rookie Reporter of the Year, the Emma Bowen Award for Courage Reporting, the Green Eyeshade Award and the Felker Award for Excellence in Long Form Journalism.

They have a range of experience at local newspapers such as the Grand Forks Herald, Las Vegas Sun Reporter and the Toledo Blade; radio stations like Wisconsin Public Radio and WBUR; and national news outlets including the Associated Press, National Public Radio, Reuters and Fox News.

In addition, the corps includes several remarkable journalists who have had extraordinary non-journalistic careers—two Olympic athletes, a pediatrician and a geography professor.

“The quality of the applicant pool was mind-boggling, and their spirit—the commitment to local journalism as public service—was genuinely inspiring,” said Steven Waldman, Co-Founder and President of Report for America.

Through their reporting, corps members will tackle some of the most important issues facing Americans today. Eight will cover health, including a pediatrician who will report on child health in Modesto, California. Seven will cover Native American issues. Others will focus on agriculture, the environment, criminal justice, and local government. Several corps members will work in Spanish-language media outlets, covering, for example, ongoing hurricane recovery in Puerto Rico. This year, Report for America will also expand its state and regional corps: Eight corps members will work in California, eight are headed to newsrooms in the Mountain West and we are expanding our corps in Appalachia by two.

Earlier this year, Report for America announced a major expansion, quadrupling its placement of reporters from 13 in 2018, to at least 61 in 2019. The expansion of the corps was made possible by philanthropic leaders including the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Facebook, Google News Initiative, the Ford Foundation, Natasha and Dirk Ziff, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, Craig Newmark Philanthropies, the Heising-Simons Foundation, the Galloway Family Foundation, the Tow Foundation, LOR Foundation and many more.

“Ensuring that every community has access to great local news is vital to restoring trust in media and our democracy. That’s why expanding the pool of excellent journalists who are passionate about local news is so important,” said Jennifer Preston, Knight Foundation Vice President for Journalism.

“I’ve had the opportunity to tell stories that, for years, had been overlooked,” said Samantha Max, a second-year corps member. “Communities need journalists to hold leaders accountable and provide platforms to ordinary citizens whose voices are often ignored.”

Report for America leverages a unique funding match model, paying half of a corps member’s salary, while encouraging and supporting its local news

partners to contribute one-quarter and local and regional funders to contribute the final quarter.

"Report for America promotes new models for shared investment in local journalism, increasing the chances of sustaining watchdog community reporting, for the community, by the community," said Charles Sennott, the CEO and Editor-in-Chief of the GroundTruth Project, which launched Report for America in 2017.

"Bringing on Report for America reporters enables KUER to open bureaus in southern Utah, so we jumped at the chance," said Andrew Becker, News Director for KUER/NPR Utah in Salt Lake City. "We have reported on that half of our state for years, but to have a steady presence there, to be part of the community on a daily basis and to report regularly on issues that concern people across Utah will be a huge win for our newsroom, our station and our listeners."

Corps members will attend Report for America's intensive training in Houston, TX in June, followed by the Investigative Reporters and Editors Conference before joining their newsrooms to launch their first year of service.

The 2019 corps members are:

California	Chico Enterprise-Record	Camille von Kaenel
California	Modesto Bee	ChrisAnna Mink
California	San Jose Mercury	Erica Hellerstein
California	CALmatters	Jackie Botts
California	Sun-Gazette	Kaitlin Washburn
California	Fresno Bee	Manuela Tobias
California	The Desert Sun	Risa Johnson
California	Sacramento Bee	Theodora Yu
Connecticut	Associated Press - CT	Chris Ehrmann

Connecticut	Connecticut Mirror	Kelan Lyons
Florida	El Nuevo Herald	tba
Hawaii	Honolulu Civil Beat	Eleni Gill
Idaho	Times-News	Megan Taros
Idaho	Boise State Public Radio	Rachel Cohen
Illinois	Chicago Sun-Times	Carlos Ballesteros
Illinois	Chicago Sun-Times	Manny Ramos
Illinois	Block Club Chicago	tba
Kentucky	Lexington Herald-Leader	Alex Acquisto
Kentucky	Lexington Herald Leader	Will Wright
Louisiana	The Advocate	Emily Woodruff
Maine	Maine Center for Inv. Reporting	Samantha Hogan
Massachusetts	WCAI	Eve Zuckoff
Michigan	Detroit Free Press	Angie Jackson
Mississippi	Mississippi Public Broadcasting	Alex Watts
Mississippi	Mississippi Today	Eric Shelton
Mississippi	Mississippi Today	Michelle Liu
Missouri	St Louis Public Radio	Eric Schmid
Montana	Yellowstone Public Radio	tba
New Jersey	Chalkbeat	Devna Bose
New Mexico	Santa Fe Reporter	Katherine Lewin
New Mexico	Albuquerque Journal	Theresa Davis
New York	Spectrum News Buffalo	Camalot Todd
New York	The City	Eileen Grench
New York	Associated Press - NY	Ryan Tarinelli
North Carolina	The News & Observer	Adam Wagner
North Carolina	The Charlotte Observer	Lauren Lindstrom
North Carolina	Q City Metro	Olivia Richard
North Carolina	Q City Metro	Ryanne Persinger
North Dakota	The Forum of Fargo-Moorhead	tba
North Dakota	The Forum of Fargo-Moorhead	Natasha Rausch
Ohio	Cincinnati Enquirer	Julia Fair
Oregon	Malheur Enterprise	Yadira Lopez
Puerto Rico	Centro de Periodismo	Rafael René Díaz-Torres

Puerto Rico	Centro de Periodismo	Victor Luis Rodríguez
Tennessee	WPLN / Nashville Public Radio	Samantha Max
Tennessee	Chattanooga Times Free Press	Wyatt Massey
Texas	Victoria Advocate	Ciara McCarthy
Texas	Texas News Hub / KERA	Mallory Falk
Texas	Dallas Morning News	Obed Manuel
Utah	Salt Lake Tribune	Becky Jacobs
Utah	KUER / NPR Utah	David Fuchs
Utah	KUER / NPR Utah	Kate Groetzinger
Utah	Salt Lake Tribune	Zachary Podmore
Washington	Spokesman-Review	Arielle Dreher
West Virginia	Charleston Gazette-Mail	Amelia Ferrell
West Virginia	Charleston Gazette Mail	Caity Coyne
West Virginia	West Virginia Public Broadcasting	Emily Allen
Wisconsin	Wisconsin Center for Investigative Reporting	Phoebe Petrovic
Wyoming	Casper Star-Tribune	Christopher Aadland
Wyoming	Buffalo Bulletin	Mara Abbott
Wyoming	Wyoming Public Media	Savannah Maher

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